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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington, D.C. 20250 (202) 720-4330

Letter No. 2579

October 9, 1992

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM PAYMENTS -- USDA's Deputy Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced that more than \$1.7 billion will be issued to nearly 386,000 producers who participate in USDA's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Under the CRP, producers retire land for 10-15 years that is highly erodible or contributing to a serious water quality problem while USDA makes the annual rental payments to the producers. USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation will be making the annual CRP rental payments beginning immediately. To date, 36.5 million acres have been enrolled in the CRP. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

NEW COTTON VARIETY FROM USDA -- Scientists from USDA's Agricultural Research Service have developed a new cotton variety, Pima S-7, which could improve the quality of fibers for consumers. Pima S-7 matures earlier, may reduce irrigation and pesticide applications, has greater heat tolerance, and also produces stronger fiber than its predecessor Pima varieties. Currently, Pima varieties are used to make high-quality sheets, towels, sewing thread and high-fashion clothing. ARS scientists worked in cooperation with the Arizona Agricultural Experiment Station. Scientists say that Pima S-7 will soon replace Pima S-6, the current commercial variety. **Contact: Dennis Senft (510) 559-6068.**

IMPORTANCE OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES IN DIET -- According to a study by USDA's Economic Research Service, Americans are consuming less than the USDA recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables. A study by the California Department of Health Services found that many consumers said that eating fruit and vegetables was inconvenient, and preparing them took too much time. Produce industry officials are looking to increase fruit and vegetable consumption by combining nutritional information with tips on selection, preparation and menu planning. **Contact: Joanne Guthrie (301) 436-5810.**

SEED DEVELOPMENT STUDIED IN SPACE -- A crop physiologist in the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station has developed a research project scheduled to accompany the next mission of the space shuttle Endeavour, set to launch December 15. The purpose of SEEDEX, which stands for Spaceflight Effects on Embryo Development Experiment, is to discover if plants are capable of reproduction and growth in space. Scientists are studying the effects of weightlessness on the development of seeds, hoping to overcome adverse effects of weightlessness on plant reproduction. NASA has plans to use plants to provide food and to clean the atmosphere for astronauts in space for extended periods. **Contact: John Tarver (504) 388-2263.**

U.S. TREE NUT EXPORTS INCREASE -- USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service reports that U.S. tree nut exports for 1991/92 were up 9% from 1990/91. The 3 major tree nut exports of pecans, walnuts and almonds increased marginally. The major increase was in the "other" category, which includes hazelnuts, Brazil nuts, macadamia nuts, pistachios, cashews and other mixed nuts. Germany was the largest market for U.S. tree nut exports, followed by Canada, Japan, Spain, the Netherlands and Italy. Contact: Frank Paison (202) 720-6590.

GLOBAL SUGAR PRODUCTION UP, U.S. CANE SUGAR DOWN -- Global sugar production is forecast at a record 115.8 million metric tons, raw value, for 1992/93, up from a USDA forecast in June. Over the past 20 years, world sugar consumption has been rising steadily. U.S. cane sugar production is forecast down slightly from last year. Louisiana's production forecast was reduced from a record 1 million tons to 800,000 because of Hurricane Andrew. Damages from Hurricane Iniki to Hawaii's cane sugar production have not yet been assessed. Contact: Peter Buzzanell (202) 219-0886.

WESTERN-STYLE SHOPPING IN EASTERN GERMANY -- The change in eastern Germany's food retailing market has been dramatic since unification in late 1990. The marketing system was virtually a distribution system with fixed prices. Today, western-style shopping centers and supermarkets are flourishing in eastern Germany, which may lead to a greater demand for convenience foods, frozen foods and fresh fruits from the United States. Consumer patterns are already showing that shoppers in eastern Germany share the same habits with western Germany. Per capita consumption of fruits has risen in eastern Germany, while consumption of butter, potatoes and meat, especially pork, has dropped sharply. Consumers are turning to fresh produce as they become more aware of health considerations. Contact: William Cox (202) 720-3329.

NEW ALTERNATIVE FOR BAGGING FALL LEAVES -- When you bag your leaves and put them out for local trash pick-up, did you know that the leaves might be buried in a landfill and remain there for decades because they have no air to help them decay, taking up space that could be used for less recyclable items? Shredding and composting reduces leaf volume by 90%. "Shredded leaves stay seated better on the landscape than whole leaves, and they do a better job of holding moisture in the soil and don't mat down like whole leaves," said Gary Wade, a horticulturist with the University of Georgia Extension Service. Wade suggests that a shredder is not necessary, but that leaves can be shredded by using a lawn mower set on the highest wheel setting. To compost the shredded leaves, add water, a little garden soil, and a cup of 10-10-10 fertilizer. Contact: Gary Wade (706) 542-2861.

FALL COLOR TOLL-FREE HOTLINE -- USDA's Forest Service says that prospects for good leaf color in the eastern U.S. are bright because of a moist year, but western leaf colors are going to be quick because it has been so dry. The Forest Service has created a toll-free hotline that provides weekly updates of peak colors and suggested routes for good viewing in selected national forests. The number is 800-354-4595. The recorded message will be updated each Thursday by 8 a.m. eastern time and will continue through October. Contact: Mary Longan (202) 205-1777.

*R-TV Fax: (202) 690-2165
Ag NewsFAX (202) 690-3944*

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA # 1844 -- Hurricane Andrew ravaged Louisiana's sugar cane and cotton crop but grower's are beginning to harvest what's left. On this edition of **AGRICULTURE USA** Maria Bynum travels to Louisiana to take a look at this year's harvest and next season's outlook. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME # 1326 -- Cookware safety; charge it!; milk for the military; margarine vs. butter; wooly winter weather watchers. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES # 1835 -- USDA news highlights; CRP payments; harvesting hurricane damaged crops; higher education loan forgiveness; remote sensing and evapotranspiration. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1541 -- Breastfeeding precaution; protein & the very young mother; regulating cholesterol; space-efficient orchards; chinese peach exchange. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Monday, October 19, U.S. ag outlook; U.S. ag. trade update; Tuesday, October 20, weekly weather and crop update; Wednesday, October 21, catfish production, rice outlook; Thursday, October 22, dairy outlook; Friday, October 23, oil crop outlook, livestock and poultry update. These are the **USDA** reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

FEATURES -- DeBoria Janifer reports on the recovery of Louisiana's sugarcane crop from Hurricane Andrew; Patrick O'Leary reports on windbreak weed barriers; Dave Luciani of Michigan State University reports on pumpkin growing.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA Chief Meteorologist Norton Strommen updates U.S. crop and weather conditions.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- Patrick O'Leary reports on USDA's We C.A.R.E. team in Delaware, and on a USDA plant breeder called "The Soybean Doctor;" Lynn Wyvill reports on parasitic worm immunity in cattle; DeBoria Janifer reports from USDA's Southern Regional Research Center in New Orleans, Louisiana.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- Agriculture Update, five minutes of USDA farm program information in "news desk" format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.

OFF MIKE

VIC POWELL (Chief USDA Radio/TV) is off canoeing somewhere for a week. So yours truly gets a chance to sharpen up her word processor.

CONCORD GRAPES LATE TO RIPEN...A cool wet summer is causing grape growers in western New York concern. Helen Baran, a grower in Westfield, New York tells me that it will be at least 30 days before her entire vineyard is ready to pick, which would put the harvest into early November. Most experts are saying that would be a little too late because freezing temperatures are likely to set in before then causing serious damage to the delicate purple grapes. Cooperative Extension Agent Jim Kamas, Fredonia, New York tells us that the concord grape harvest is underway at only the optimal sites in western New York. He says processors are beginning to lower their standards when it comes to the sugar content of those grapes. Kamas says a hard freeze could mean a large scale loss for concord grape growers this season.

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Radio-TV Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture
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HURRICANE ANDREW...During the week of September 7, 1992 I traveled to Miami, Florida and on down to Homestead and Florida City to take a first hand look at the disaster area left by Hurricane Andrew. It was an experience that I will never forget. I can only describe Homestead as an area that looks like a bomb has been detonated over South Florida. Everything has been flattened and nothing is left undamaged. USDA employees at the Farmers Home Administration, Soil Conservation Service and ASCS office in Homestead are working seven days a week to try to get the necessary paperwork in to help the local farmers obtain assistance like low interest loans. Many of these employees had lost their own homes but were helping others first. The people at the Homestead, Florida office deserve many medals for their efforts!

DOUG WAKEFIELD...USDA Radio Reporter/Producer is leaving us to take a job in the world of computers at the General Services Administration. We shall miss Doug and his unique style of reporting the news and features for USDA radio. It is our loss and GSA's gain.

Brenda Curtis-Heiken
BRENDA CURTIS-HEIKEN

Acting Chief, Radio and TV Division